

A Walk on the Wild Side



With Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program funds and a lot of ambition, NRCS conservation technician, Sally Eugaire, set out to prove that enthusiasm can be contagious. Realizing that the town of West Rutland could use a handicapped-accessible boardwalk to extend into the West Rutland marsh, Sally contacted town officials to see how NRCS could help. After months of hard work and lots of help from partner organizations including Vermont State Department of Environmental Conservation, the Poultney/Mettawee Natural Resources Conservation District, the Rutland

County Audubon Society, and local schools, the new "a window to our natural environment" boardwalk was dedicated. At the dedication ceremony last week, more than 70 wildlife enthusiasts were able to stroll out into the 400-acre marsh, declared an Important Bird Area by the Audubon Society. At least 102 species, including the American and least bittern, swamp sparrows, marsh wrens, pied-billed grebes, mallards, and American black ducks now call the West Rutland marsh home. A home that naturalists, school children, and those who just enjoy the outdoors can now enjoy thanks to the enthusiasm and dedication of NRCS employees who worked to preserve and enhance this Lake Champlain Basin watershed natural area.